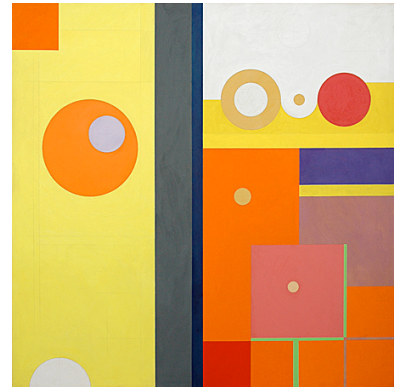


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GEOMETRIC ABSTRACTION: RECURRING PATTERNS IN AMERICAN ART

August 5 – October 31, 2010

http://www.sullivangoss.com/exhibits/SGTV_GEOMETRICABSTRACTION/



SULLIVAN GOSS – An American Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition of American paintings, watercolors and sculptures created between 1937 and this year that rely only on color and shape, proportion and scale to create beauty. Geometric Abstraction is less a school than an aesthetic, one that has been explored in different eras and with different agendas over the last ninety years. Sullivan Goss will present over twenty-four works that will examine some of these styles and motivations, with works by heavyweights like **Ilya Bolotowsky** and **Emil Bistram** alongside local artists like **Nancy Gifford, Zack Paul, John Moses** and the gallery's own **Ken Bortolazzo**.

Americans were not the first people to explore pure or non-objective abstraction in painting. The roots stretch back to the dawn of the twentieth century in Europe when several strains of geometric abstraction seemed to sprout up within just a few years. Among the innovators were Dutch Neoplasticists like Theo Van Doesburg and Piet Mondrian, Russian artists like Wassily Kandinsky (and through him the Bauhaus), the Russian Suprematist Kasimir Malevich, and a feisty band of Constructivists like Vladimir Tatlin, Naum Gabo and Alexandr Rodchenko. Some wanted an art of pure spirituality. Others were intent on reflecting the aesthetics of the industrial revolution. This tangle of roots found an inhospitable climate and withered as Cubism and other forms of abstraction took hold instead.

Beginning in the 1930s, American artists took these strains and made new hybrids. The **American Abstract Artists** group, founded in 1936 in New York, provided safe harbor for a number of artists who decided to take up the cause. In this exhibition, the so-called "triple A" artists are represented by one of its most famous founders, Ilya Bolotowsky. There was another faction in Taos, New Mexico that called itself the Transcendental Painting Group and which strove to embed theosophical spirituality into images of floating geometric shapes. In this exhibition, they are represented by Emil Bistram.

Several pieces by Sidney Gordin provide a particularly interesting window into how geometric abstraction continued to evolve from 1937, when he painted his earliest piece, until the 1980s when he made one of his last free standing geometric sculptures.

Californians took up the banner in the 1950s and were canonized as a group in a 1959 exhibition called "Four Abstract Classicists." Better known as "the Hard Edge" painters, they created a *cool*, new, clean aesthetic that matched the cars, the surfboards and the sunny optimism of the south coast. They will be represented by an iconic later work by Karl Benjamin. Jules Engel, an animator and graphic designer, joins them with an evocative series of juxtaposed shapes made in the 1970s, when he was joined from a continent away by Abstract Expressionist Hassel Smith.

In case after case, returning to the roots of Geometric Abstraction seemed to provide a way out for artists stuck in a creative rut. Frustrated with Regionalism, the American Abstract Artists struck out anew. Bored with Abstract Expressionism, artists went back to the well in the fifties. In the sixties, geometry created the template for minimalism. In the seventies, it was steeped in whimsy or made to look psychedelic as in Op Art. To this day, geometric abstraction looks like the art of the future. It is forever new, buoyant and optimistic. Aesthetically, it has remained influential in painting, sculpture, architecture and graphic design.

And still, it offers new ways forward. Santa Barbara artists Ken Bortolazzo, Nancy Gifford, John Moses and Zack Paul have all made geometric abstractions without call from the exhibition's curator, Jeremy Tessmer. After almost a century, the well has not run dry.

GEOMETRIC ABSTRACTION: Recurring Patterns in American Art will contain important works by such notable artists as Ilya Bolotowsky, Karl Benjamin, Hassel Smith, Ida Kohlmeyer and Emil Bistram, as well as work by Val Bertoia, Thomas Eldred, Jules Engel, Sidney Gordin, and Charles Keck and Santa Barbara artists Ken Bortolazzo, Nancy Gifford, John Moses, and Zack Paul.

Sullivan Goss will present GEOMETRIC ABSTRACTION: Recurring Patterns in American Art from August 5th – October 31st 2010. Also on exhibit are a solo exhibition for KEN BORTOLAZZO, COLORING OUTSIDE THE LINES: The Art of Anders Aldrin (1889-1970), and AMERICANS AT PLAY.

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